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MASTERPIECES
IN COLOUR
EDITED BY - -
T. LEMAN HARE

653

WATTS

(1817–1904)

"Masterpieces in Colour" Series

Artist.	Author.
VELAZQUEZ.	S. L. Bensusan.
REYNOLDS.	S. L. Bensusan.
TURNER.	C. Lewis Hind.
ROMNEY.	C. Lewis Hind.
GREUZE.	Alys Eyre Macklin.
BOTTICELLI.	Henry B. Binns.
ROSSETTI.	Lucien Pissarro.
BELLINI.	George Hay.
FRA ANGELICO.	James Mason.
REMBRANDT.	Josef Israels.
LEIGHTON.	A. Lys Baldry.
RAPHAEL.	Paul G. Konody.
HOLMAN HUNT.	Mary E. Coleridge.
TITIAN.	S. L. Bensusan.
MILLAIS.	A. Lys Baldry.
CARLO DOLCI.	George Hay.
GAINSBOROUGH.	Max Rothschild.
TINTORETTO.	S. L. Bensusan.
LUINI.	James Mason.
FRANZ HALS.	Edgcumbe Staley.
VAN DYCK.	Percy M. Turner.
LEONARDO DA VINCI.	M. W. Brockwell.
RUBENS.	S. L. Bensusan.
WHISTLER.	T. Martin Wood.
HOLBEIN.	S. L. Bensusan.
BURNE-JONES.	A. Lys Baldry.
VIGÉE LE BRUN.	C. Haldane MacFall.
CHARDIN.	Paul G. Konody.
FRAGONARD.	C. Haldane MacFall.
MEMLINC.	W. H. J. & J. C. Weale.
CONSTABLE.	C. Lewis Hind.
RAEBURN.	James L. Caw.
JOHN S. SARGENT.	T. Martin Wood.
LAWRENCE.	S. L. Bensusan.
DÜRER.	H. E. A. Furst.
MILLET.	Percy M. Turner.
WATTEAU.	C. Lewis Hind.
HOGARTH.	C. Lewis Hind.
MURILLO.	S. L. Bensusan.
WATTS.	W. Loftus Hare.
INGRES.	A. J. Finberg.

Others in Preparation.

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PLATE I.—DEATH CROWNING INNOCENCE

(Frontispiece)

A little child lying in the lap of the winged figure of Death. Death, ever to Watts a silent angel of pity, "takes charge of Innocence, placing it beyond the reach of evil." It was first exhibited at the Winter Exhibition of the New Gallery, 1896, and was given to the nation in 1897. It is now at the Tate Gallery.

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WATTS

BY W. LOFTUS HARE

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I

A BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

IN July of 1904 the eighty-seven mortal years of George Frederick Watts came to an end. He had outlived all the contemporaries and acquaintances of his youth; few, even among the now living, knew him in his middle age; while to those of the present generation, who knew little of the man though much of his work, he appeared as

a courtly old gentleman whose message was delivered, whose work was accomplished, and who waited for its complete acceptance. As for the next generation, G. F. Watts will have become to it entirely an historical person, who, in the company of the other great men of the nineteenth century, has faded quite into the past, leaving his monuments behind him. As time proceeds "the real Watts" will be less and less known.

Although indeed Watts' life must be taken as a unity, yet one cannot refrain from the thought that there were in him three lives linked in one—three lives corresponding to the three portraits he has left of himself; the youth of seventeen years, with flowing locks and Shelley-like attire (painted in 1834); the bearded man of forty-seven, in dark coat and sombrero hat; and the familiar octogenarian of the snow-white hair and purple skull cap. Even Watts' work lends itself to three such epochs, representing first the man who seeks his place; secondly, him who finds and becomes established in it; and finally, him who, from the vantage ground of attainment, strikes out with vigorous independence and freedom.

G. F. Watts was born in London in the year

1817, the son of a piano-tuner. As a child he began his first essays in pictorial art by copying the plates from a prayer book, and by inventing imaginative illustrations to Homer and Sir Walter Scott. At fifteen he became a painter in oils. His first commission came about from his having been sent by his father on a message to a customer, who, from interest in the lad, learned of his intention to become a painter. At seventeen he made his own portrait, which is still with us. Having definitely embarked on an artistic career, young Watts spent a good deal of his time in the studio of the sculptor William Behnes, but he will not admit to any other masters than the "Elgin Marbles" of Pheidias the Greek: "I received no teaching, I visited no painter's studio"—these are his words.

In 1837 young Watts succeeded in exhibiting at the Academy "The Wounded Heron," a picture which, while creditable as a painting, was a curious prophecy of his later didactic and humanitarian achievements. In 1840 he produced pictures illustrating Boccaccio (now at the Tate Gallery) and Shakespeare, and in 1841 the Royal Academy Exhibition contained three portraits of the

members of the Ionides family, thus inaugurating the series of private and public portraits for which he became so famous. The Watts of our day, however, the teacher first and the painter afterwards, had not yet come on the scene. His first aspiration towards monumental painting began in the year 1843, when in a competition for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament he gained a prize of £300 for his cartoon of "Caractacus led Captive through the Streets of Rome." At this time, when history was claiming pictorial art as her servant and expositor, young Watts carried off the prize against the whole of his competitors. This company included the well-known historical painter Haydon, who, from a sense of the impossibility of battling against his financial difficulties, and from the neglect, real or fancied, of the leading politicians, destroyed himself by his own hand.

The £300 took the successful competitor to Italy, where for four years he remained as a guest of Lord Holland. Glimpses of the Italy he gazed upon and loved are preserved for us in a landscape of the hillside town of Fiesole with blue sky and clouds, another of a castellated villa

PLATE II.—THE MINOTAUR

In this terrible figure, half man, half bull, gazing over the sea from the battlement of a hill tower, we see the artist's representation of the greed and lust associated with modern civilisations. The picture was exhibited at the Winter Exhibition of the New Gallery, 1896, and formed part of the Watts Gift in 1897. It hangs in the Watts Room at the Tate Gallery.

and mountains near Florence, and a third of the "Carrara Mountains near Pisa"; while of his portraiture of that day, "Lady Holland" and "Lady Dorothy Nevill" are relics of the Italian visit.

Italy, and particularly Florence, was perpetual fascination and inspiration to Watts. There he imbibed the influences of Orcagna and Titian—influences, indeed, which were clearly represented in the next monumental painting which he attempted. It came about that Lord Holland persuaded his guest to enter a fresh competition for the decoration of the Parliament Houses, and Watts carried off the prize with his "Alfred inciting the Saxons to resist the landing of the Danes." The colour and movement of the great Italian masters, conspicuously absent from the "Caractacus" cartoon, were to be seen in this new effort, where, as has been said, the English king stands like a Raphaelesque archangel in the midst of the design.

In 1848 Watts had attained, one might almost say, the position of official historical painter to the State, a post coveted by the unfortunate Haydon; and he received a commission to paint a fresco of "St. George overcomes the Dragon,"

which was not completed till 1853. In this year he contributed as an appendix to the Diary of Haydon—in itself an exciting document, showing how wretched the life of an official painter then might be—a note telling of the state of historical and monumental painting in the 'forties, and of his own attitude towards it; a few of his own words, written before the days of the "poster," may be usefully quoted here:

ON THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT OF ARTISTS

Patriots and statesmen alike forget that the time will come when the want of great art in England will produce a gap sadly defacing the beauty of the whole national structure. . . .

Working, for example, as an historian to record England's battles, Haydon would, no doubt, have produced a series of mighty and instructive pictures. . . .

Why should not the Government of a mighty country undertake the decoration of all the public buildings, such as Town Halls, National Schools, and even Railway Stations. . . .

. . . Or considering the walls as slates whereon the schoolboy writes his figures, the great productions of other times might be reproduced, if but to be rubbed out when fine originals could be procured; for the expense would very little exceed that of whitewashing. . . .

If, for example, on some convenient wall the whole line of British sovereigns were painted—were monumental effigies

well and correctly drawn, with date, length of reign, remarkable events written underneath, these worthy objects would be attained—intellectual exercise, decoration of space, and instruction to the public.

The year 1848 was a critical time for Watts; his first allegorical picture, "Time and Oblivion," was painted, and, in the year following, "Life's Illusions" appeared on the walls of the famous Academy which contained the first works of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Watts was not of the party, though he might have been had he desired; he preferred independence.

Watts' personal life was at this time pervaded by the influence of Lord and Lady Holland, who, having returned from Florence to London, had him as a constant visitor to Holland House. In 1850 he went to live at The Dower House, an old building in the fields of Kensington. There, as a guest of the Prinsep family, he set up as a portrait painter. His host and family connections were some of the first to sit for him; and he soon gained fame in this class of work.

There was a temporary interruption in 1856, when a journey to the East, in company with

Sir Charles Newton, for the purpose of opening the buried Temple of Mausolus at Halicarnassus, gave Watts further insight into the old Greek world; and, one cannot but think, stimulated his efforts, later so successful, in depicting for us so many incidents in classical lore. We have, in a view of a mountainous coast called "Asia Minor," and another, "The Isle of Cos," two charming pictorial records of this important expedition. The next six years of the artist's life were spent as a portrait painter; not, indeed, if one may say so, as a professional who would paint any one's portrait, but as a friend, who loved to devote himself to his friends.

In pursuance of his principles touching monumental work, Watts engaged himself over a period of five years on the greatest and the last of his civic paintings—namely, the "Justice; a Hemicycle of Lawgivers," to which I shall later refer.

Watts was a man who seems to have enjoyed in a singular degree the great privilege of friendship, which while it has its side of attachment, has also its side of detachment. Even in his youthful days he never "settled down," but was

a visitor and guest rather than an attached scholar and student at the schools and studies. It is told of him that when just about to leave Florence, after a short visit, he casually presented a letter of introduction to Lord Holland, which immediately led to a four years' stay there, and this friendship lasted for many years after the ambassador's return to England. Other groups of friends, represented by the Ionides, the Prinseps, the Seniors, and the Russell Barringtons, seemed to have possessed him as their special treasure, in whose friendship he passed a great part of his life. Two great men, the titular chiefs of poetry and painting, were much impressed by him, and drew from him great admiration—Tennyson and Leighton; from the latter he learned much; in the sphere of music, of which Watts was passionately fond, there stands out Joachim the violinist.

Watts used to recall, as the happiest time in his life, his youthful days as a choral singer; and he always regretted that he had not become a musician. Besides being fond of singing he declared that he constantly heard (or felt) mystic music—symphonies, songs, and chorales. Only

once did he receive a *vision* of a picture—idea, composition and colours—that was "Time, Death, and Judgment." Music, after all, is nearer to the soul of the intuitive man than any of the arts, and Watts felt this deeply. He also had considerable dramatic talent.

In 1864 some friends found for Watts a bride in the person of Miss Ellen Terry. The painter and the youthful actress were married in Kensington in February of that year, and Watts took over Little Holland House. The marriage, however, was irksome, both to the middle-aged painter and the vivacious child of sixteen, whose words, taken from her autobiography, are the best comment we possess on this incident:

"Many inaccurate stories have been told of my brief married life, and I have never contradicted them—they were so manifestly absurd. Those who can imagine the surroundings into which I, a raw girl, undeveloped in all except my training as an actress, was thrown, can imagine the situation. . . . I wondered at the new life and worshipped it because of its beauty. When it suddenly came to an end I was thunderstruck; and refused at first to consent to the separation which was arranged for me in much the same way as my marriage had been. . . . There were no vulgar accusations on either side, and the words I read in the deed of separation, 'incompatibility of temper,' more than covered the ground. Truer still would have been 'incompatibility of *occupation,*' and the interference of well-meaning friends.

"'The marriage was not a happy one,' they will probably say after my death, and I forestall them by saying that it was in many ways very happy indeed. What bitterness there was effaced itself in a very remarkable way." (*The Story of My Life*, 1908.)

In 1867, at the age of fifty, without his application or knowledge, Watts was made an Associate, and in the following year a full Member, of the Royal Academy. Younger men had preceded him in this honour, but doubtless Watts' modesty and independence secured for him a certain amount of official neglect. The old studio in Melbury Road, Kensington, was pulled down in 1868, and a new house was built suited to the painter who had chosen for himself a hermit life. The house was built in such a way as would avoid the possibility of entertaining guests, and was entirely dedicated to work. Watts continued his series of official portraits, and many of the most beautiful mythical paintings followed this change. Five years later, Watts was found at Freshwater in the Isle of Wight, and in 1876 he secured what he had so long needed, the sympathetic help and co-operation in his personal and artistic aims, in Mr. and Mrs. Russell Barrington, his neighbours.

In 1877 Watts decided, in conformity with his views on patriotic art, to give his pictures to the nation, and there followed shortly after, in 1881 and 1882, exhibitions of his works in Whitechapel and the Grosvenor Gallery. A leaflet entitled "What should a picture say?" issued with the approval of Watts, in connection with the Whitechapel Exhibition, has a characteristic answer to the question put to him.

"Roughly speaking, a picture must be regarded in the same light as written words. It must speak to the beholder and tell him something. . . . If a picture is a representation only, then regard it from that point of view only. If it treats of a historical event, consider whether it fairly tells its tale. Then there is another class of picture, that whose purpose is to convey suggestion and idea. You are not to look at that picture as an actual representation of facts, for it comes under the same category of dream visions, aspirations, and we have nothing very distinct except the sentiment. If the painting is bad—the writing, the language of art, it is a pity. The picture is then not so good as it should be, but the thought is there, and the thought is what the artist wanted to express, and it is or should be impressed on the spectator."

In 1886 his pictures were exhibited in New York, where they created a great sensation; but incidents connected with the exhibition, and

PLATE III.—HOPE

(At the Tate Gallery)

At the first glance it is rather strange that such a picture should bear such a title, but the imagery is perfectly true. The heavens are illuminated by a solitary star, and Hope bends her ear to catch the music from the last remaining string of her almost shattered lyre. The picture was painted in 1885 and given to the nation in 1897. A very fine duplicate is in the possession of Mrs. Rushton.

criticisms upon it, caused the artist much nervous distress.

It was a peculiar difficulty of his nature which led him to insist, on the occasions of the London and provincial exhibitions of his pictures, that the borrowers were to make all arrangements with his frame-maker, that he should not be called upon to act in any way, and that no personal reference should be introduced. Watts always considered himself a private person; he disliked public functions and fled from them if there were any attempt to draw attention to him. His habits of work were consistent with these unusual traits. At sunrise he was at his easel. During the hot months of summer he was hard at work in his London studio, leaving for the country only for a few weeks during foggy weather.

At the age of sixty-nine Watts married Miss Mary Fraser-Tytler, with whom he journeyed to Egypt, painting there a study of the "Sphinx," one of the cleverest of his landscapes. Three years after his return, he settled at Limnerslease, Compton, in Surrey, where he took great interest in the attempt to revive industrial art among the rural population.

Twice, in 1885 and 1894, the artist refused, for private reasons, the baronetcy that other artists had accepted. He lived henceforth and died the untitled patriot and artist, George Frederick Watts.

II

THE MAN AND THE MESSENGER

Having given in the preceding pages the briefest possible outline of the life of Watts as a man amongst men, we are now able to come to closer quarters. He was essentially a messenger —a teacher, delivering to the world, in such a manner that his genius and temperament made possible, ideas which had found their place in his mind. He would have been the first to admit that without these ideas he would be less than nothing.

If it were possible to bring together all the external acts of the painter's life, his journeyings to and fro, his making and his losing friends, we should have insufficient data to enable us to understand Watts' message; his great ambitions, his constant failures, his intimate experiences,

his reflections and determinations—known to none but himself—surely these, the internal life of Watts, are the real sources of his message? True, he was in the midst of the nineteenth century, breathing its atmosphere, familiar with the ideals of its great men, doubting, questioning, and hoping with the rest. To him, as to many a contemporary stoic, the world was in a certain sense an alien ground, and mortal life was to be stoically endured and made the best of. It is impossible to believe, however, that this inspiring and prophetic painter reproduced and handed on merely that which his time and society gave him. His day and his associates truly gave him much; the past and his heredity made their contributions; but we must believe that the purest gold was fired in the crucible of his inner experience, his joys and his sufferings. In him was accomplished that great discovery which the philosophers have called Pessimism; he not only saw in other men (as depicted in his memorable canvas of 1849), but he experienced in himself the transitory life's illusions. To Watts, the serious man of fifty years, Love and Death, Faith and Hope, Aspiration, Suffering, and Remorse,

were not, as to the eighteenth-century rhymester, merely Greek ladies draped in flowing raiment; to him they were realities, intensely focussed in himself. Watts was giving of himself, of his knowledge and observation of what Love is and does, and how Death appears so variously; and who but a man who knew the melancholy of despair could paint that picture "Hope"?

Immediately after the central crisis of his personal life appeared the canvas entitled "Fata Morgana," illustrative of a knight in vain pursuit of a phantom maiden; and before long there was from his brush the pictured story of a lost love, "Orpheus and Eurydice," one of the saddest of all myths, but, one feels, no old myth to him.

By a more careful analysis of the artist's work we hope to learn the teaching Watts set himself to give, and to ascertain the means that he adopted; but one point needs to be made clear at this stage, namely, that although Watts was a great teacher, yet he was not a revolutionary. The ideals he held up were not new or strange, but old, well-tried, one might almost say conventional. They represent the ideals which, in the friction and turmoil of ages, have emerged as

definite, clear, final. They are not disputed or dubious notions, but accepted truisms forgotten and neglected, waiting for the day when men shall live by them.

Furthermore, Watts was not in any sense a mystic—neither personally or as an artist. "The Dweller in the Innermost" is not the transcendental self known to a few rare souls, but is merely conscience, known to all. The biblical paintings have no secret meaning assigned to them. The inhabitants of Eden, the hero of the Deluge, the Hebrew patriarchs, Samson and Satan —all these are the familiar figures of the evangelical's Bible. "Eve Repentant" is the woman Eve, the mother of the race; "Jacob and Esau" are the brothers come to reconciliation; "Jonah" is the prophet denouncing the Nineveh of his day and the Babylon of this. The teaching—and there is teaching in every one of them—is plain and ethical. So also, with the Greek myths; they teach plainly—they hold no esoteric interpretations. Watts is no Neo-Platonist weaving mystical doctrines from the ancient hero tales; he is rather a stoic, a moralist, a teacher of earthly things.

But we must be careful to guard against the impression of Watts as a lofty philosopher consciously issuing proclamations by means of his art. Really he was not aware of being a philosopher at all; he was simply an artist, an exquisitely delicate and sensitive medium, who, when once before his canvas, suddenly filled with his idea, was compelled to say his word. If there be any synthesis about his finished work —and no one can deny this—it was not because Watts gave days and nights and years to "thinking things out." His paintings are, as he used to call them, "anthems," brought forth by the intuitive man, the musician. This was the fundamental Watts. Whatever unity there be, is due rather to unity of inspiration than to strength or definiteness of character and accomplishment, and this was sometimes referred to by Watts as a golden thread passing through his life—a thread of good intention—which he felt would guide him through the labyrinth of distractions, mistakes, irritations, ill health, and failures.

One of the striking incidents in the life of Watts was his offer to decorate Euston Railway

Station with frescoes entitled "The Progress of Cosmos." "Chaos" we have in the Tate Gallery, full of suggestiveness and interest. We see a deep blue sky above the distant mountains, gloriously calm and everlasting; in the middle distance to the left is a nebulous haze of light, while in the foreground the rocks are bursting open and the flames rush through. Figures of men, possessed by the energy and agony of creation, are seen wrestling with the elements of fire and earth. One of these figures, having done his work, floats away from the glow of the fire across the transparent water, while others of his creative family have quite passed the struggling stage of movement and are reclining permanent and gigantic to the right of the picture. The same idea is repeated in the chain of draped women who are emerging from the watery deep; at first they are swept along in isolation, then they fly in closer company, next they dance and finally walk in orderly procession. But Chaos, for all this, is a unity; of all material forms it is the most ancient form; Cosmos however is the long-drawn tale beginning with the day when "The Spirit of God

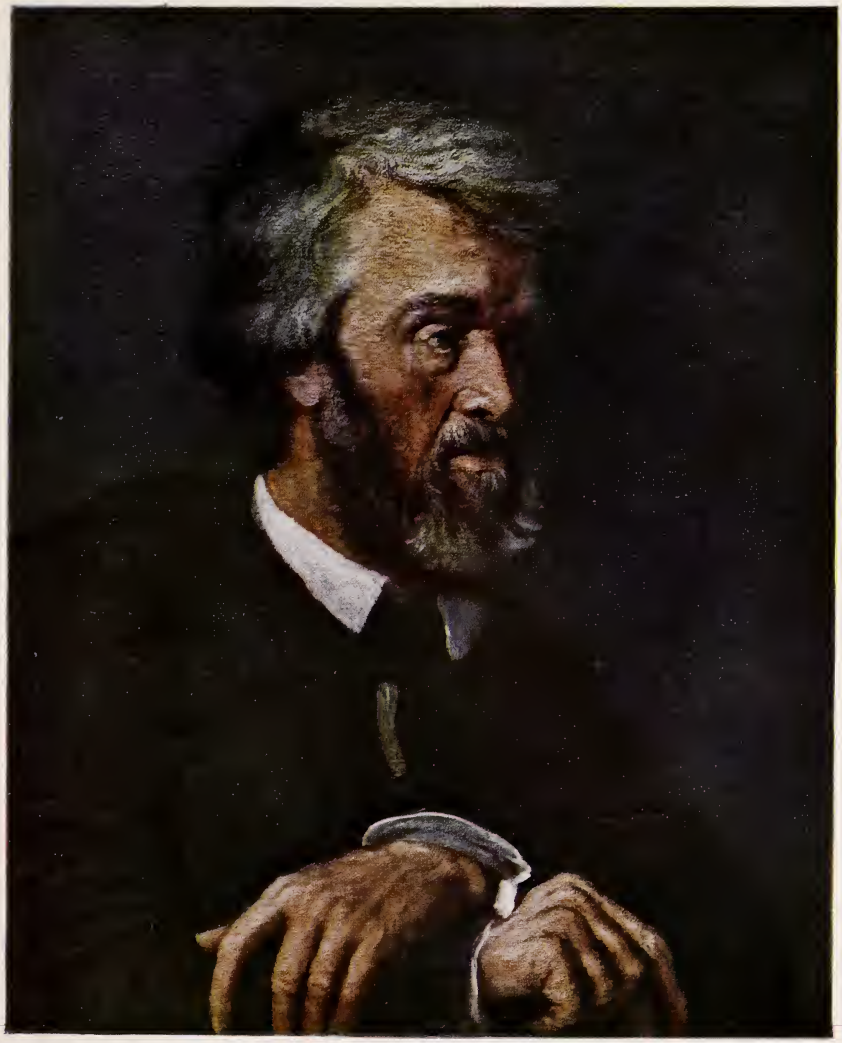
brooded on the face of the waters." Cosmos might have been Watts' synthetic pictorial philosophy; Herbert Spencer with his pen, and he with his brush, as it were, should labour side by side. But this was not to be; the Directors of the North-Western Railway declined the artist's generous offer, and he had to get his "Cosmos" painted by degrees. On the whole, perhaps, we should be thankful that the railway company liberated Watts from this self-imposed task. We remember that Dante in his exile set out to write "Il Convivio," a Banquet of so many courses that one might tremble at the prospect of sitting down to it; the four treatises we have are interesting, though dry as dust; but if Dante had finished his Banquet, he might never have had time for his "Divine Comedy"; so perhaps, after all, we shall be well content to be without Watts' "Cosmos," remembering what we have gained thereby. Besides, the continuous and spontaneous self-revelation of an artist or a poet is sometimes truer than a rigid predetermined plan.

A few words from the pen of the artist, appearing by way of preface to a book, "A Plain Handi-

PLATE IV.—THOMAS CARLYLE

(At the South Kensington Museum)

This canvas was painted in 1868, and is the earlier of the two portraits of the famous historian painted by Watts. It formed part of the Foster Bequest. It is interesting to compare this with the painting in the National Portrait Gallery.



craft," may here be quoted to indicate the strong views Watts took on the "Condition-of-England Question." His interest in art was not centred in painting, or sculpture, or himself, or his fellow artists. He believed in the sacred mission of art as applied to profane things. We see how closely he adheres to the point of view made so famous by Ruskin. Both Watts and Ruskin, one feels, belong rather to the days of Pericles, when everything was best in the state because the citizens gave themselves up to it and to each other. Writing of the necessity and utility of reviving Plain Handicrafts among the mass of the people, the painter of "Mammon" says:

". . . . When the object is to vitalise and develop faculties —the especial inheritance of the human race, but strangely dormant in our time among the largest section of the community—the claim becomes one that cannot be ignored. Looking at the subject from a point of view commanding a wide horizon, it seems to be nothing less than a social demand, rising into a religious duty, to make every endeavour in the direction of supplying all possible compensating consolation for the routine of daily work, become so mechanical and dreary. When home is without charm, and country without attaching bonds, the existence of a nation is rudely shaken; dull discontent leading to sullen discontent, may readily become active animosity. There will not be men interested in the maintenance of law and order,

who feel that law and order bring them no perceptible formal advantage. In the race for wealth, it has been forgotten that wealth alone can offer neither dignity nor permanent safety; no dignity, if the man of the population is degraded by dull toil and disgraceful competition; no safety, if large numbers drag on a discontented existence, while the more active and intelligent leave our shores.

"Whether or not our material wealth is to be increased or diminished, it is certain that a more general well-being and contentment must be striven for. A happy nation will be a wealthy nation, wealthy in the best sense, in the assurance that its children can be depended upon in case of need, wealth above the fortune of war, and safety above the reach of fortune. The rush of interest in the direction of what are understood as worldly advantages, has trampled out the sense of pleasure in the beautiful, and the need of its presence as an element essential to the satisfaction of daily life, which must have been unconsciously felt in ages less absorbed in acquiring wealth for itself alone. In olden times our art congresses would have been as needless as congresses to impress on the general mind the advantages of money-making would be in these." (*Plain Handicraft*, 1892.)

In G. F. Watts, however, we have an instance of a man who, although he sees and is attracted by abstract principles of ethics, does not perceive the manner of their final application; he is not really scientific. It might be thought that the painter of "Greed and Toil," "The Sempstress," "Mammon," "The Dweller of the Innermost,"

and "Love Triumphant," would be able to indicate, in that sphere of social activity called "practical politics," how these principles could find their expression and realisation. It is interesting, however, to know, and to have it authoritatively from his own pen, that Watts at least could not discern either the time or the application of these ethical principles to the affairs of the great world; for in 1901 there appeared from his hand a quasi-philosophical defence of the South African War, entitled "Our Race as Pioneers." He said:

"Inevitable social and political measures claim obedience, which may be at variance with the spiritual and ethical conscience; but there comes in the question of necessity, apparent laws that contest with pure right and wrong; . . . and as we must live, nothing remains but commerce; and commerce cannot be carried on without competition, and pushing the limits of our interests. The result of competition can only be conflict—war, unless some other outlet can be found. Commerce will not supply this; its very activity, which is its health and life, will produce the ambition, envy, and jarring interests that will be fatal to peace. . . . The principle, *Movement*, must have its outlet, its safety valve. This has always been war. . . . The goddess Trade, the modern Pandora, has in her box all the evils that afflict mankind. . . . How can Commerce, as understood by the principles of trade, abolish war?"

"The simple principles of right and wrong are easily de-

fined," and perhaps easily painted; "but the complexity of human affairs and legitimate interests, conducing to the activity demanded by the great law, *Movement*, makes some elasticity necessary, even where there is the most honest desire to be just."

Thus, from his own words, we see how the painter transcends the politician; he is a stimulator, he gives hints, not instructions; he is commanding, imperative, but he does not show how, nor stay to devise ways and means. He even perceives, as he thinks, that though the commands of his pictures, "Faith," "Conscience," and "Love Triumphant," be given, yet they cannot be obeyed fully because of "Evolution" and "Destiny," or as he calls it "Movement."

To his intimate friends Watts, who was so introspective, often complained of "the duality of my nature." In the midst of affairs, financial or worldly, on questions of criticism, personal conduct and the like, the great artist was variable and uncertain. Though humble and self-deprecatory to an extreme degree, he made mistakes from which he could escape only with great difficulty; and he suffered much from depression and melancholy. This man, however, never appears in the pictures; when once in his studio, alone

PLATE V.—LOVE AND LIFE

(At the Tate Gallery)

Love, strong in his immortal youth, leads Life, a slight female figure, along the steep uphill path ; with his broad wings he shelters her, that the winds of heaven may not visit her too roughly. Violets spring where Love has trod, and as they ascend to the mountain top the air becomes more and more golden. The implication is that, without the aid of Divine Love, fragile Human Life could not have power to ascend the steep path upward. First exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1885. Companion picture to "Love and Death," and "Love Triumphant."

facing his canvas, Watts is final, absolute, an undisturbed and undistracted unity, conscious of that overwhelming "rightness" known to a Hebrew prophet. Whatever Time or Death may have in store for him or any man, there riding swiftly above them is Judgment the Absolute One; whatever theories may be spun from the perplexed mind of the magazine writer about Expansion and Necessity, there sits the terrible "Mammon" pilloried for all time. Indeed, he said his pictures were "for all time"; they were from the mind and hand of the seer, who, rising from his personality, transcended it; and as the personality of dual nature gradually fades away into the forgotten past, the Messenger emerges ever more and more clearly, leaving his graphic testimonies spread out upon a hundred canvases. It might be said as a final estimate that the value and sincerity of Watts' work becomes intensified a hundred-fold when we remember that its grandeur and dignity, its unity and its calm, was the work of a man who seldom, if ever, attained internal peace. Like some who speak wiser than they know, so Watts gave himself as an instrument to inspirations of which he was not able,

through adverse circumstances, to make full use. Thus was the Man divided from the Messenger.

III

A REVIEW OF WATTS' WORK

Failing the "Progress of the Cosmos," we have from the mind and brush of Watts a great number of paintings, which may be grouped according to their character. Such divisions must not be regarded as rigid or official, for often enough a picture may belong to several groups at the same time. For the purpose of our survey, however, we divide them as follows:

1. Monumental or Historical Paintings and Frescoes.
2. Humanitarian or Social Paintings.
3. Portraits, private and public.
4. Biblical Paintings.
5. Mythical Paintings.
6. "Pessimistic" Paintings.
7. The Great Realities.
8. The Love Series.
9. The Death Series.
10. Landscapes.
11. Unclassified Paintings.
12. Paintings of Warriors.

"Caractacus" was the first of the monumental paintings; by them Watts appears as a citizen and a patriot, whose insular enthusiasm

extends backward to the time when the British chief Caractacus fought and was subdued by the Romans. He enters also into the spirit of the resistance offered to the Danes by King Alfred. George and the Dragon are included by him in the historical though mythical events of our race. Undoubtedly the most remarkable of Watts' monumental paintings is the fresco entitled "Justice; a Hemicycle of Lawgivers," painted for the Benchers' Hall in Lincoln's Inn. It is 45 × 40 feet. Here Watts, taking the conventional and theoretical attitude, identifies law-making with justice, and in his fresco we see thirty-three figures, representing Moses, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Confucius, Lycurgus and his fellow-Greeks, Numa Pompilius and other Romans. Here figures also Justinian, the maker of the great Code; Mahomet, King Alfred, and even Attila the Hun. The painting represents the close of this phase of Watts' work; he received a gift of £500 and a gold cup in memory of its achievement. In England, at least, no one has ever attempted or accomplished anything in fresco of so great dimensions. Watts' monumental genius drove him to sculpture on

the grand scale also. "Hugh Lupus" for the Duke of Westminster, and "Physical Energy," upon which he laboured at intervals during twenty-five years of his life, are his great triumphs in this direction. It is not the first time that an artist deficient in health and strength has made physical energy into a demi-god. Men often, perhaps always, idealise what they have not. It was the wish of the sculptor to place a cast of "Physical Energy" on the grave of Cecil Rhodes on the Matoppo Hills in South Africa, indicating how Watts found it possible (by idealising what he wished to idealise), to include within the scope and patronage of his art, the activities, aims, and interests of modern Colonial Enterprise.

Humanitarian Paintings.—The earliest of these, "The Wounded Heron," asks our pity for the injured bird, and forbids us to join in the enthusiasm of the huntsman who hurries for his suffering prize. The same thought is expressed in the beautiful "Shuddering Angel," who is covering his face with his hands at the sight of the mangled plumage scattered on the altar of fashion. In the large canvases, "A Patient

Life of Unrequited Toil," and "Midday Rest," we have paintings of horses, both of them designed to teach us consideration for the "friend of man." "The Sempstress" sings us Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt."

"The Good Samaritan" (see Plate VII.) properly belongs to this series. It was presented by the artist to the citizens of Manchester, as an expression of his admiration of Thomas Wright, the prison philanthropist, whose work was at that time (1852) creating a sensation in the north of England. If we compare this painting with other Biblical subjects executed at a later date, we see how much Watts' work has gained since then. The almost smooth texture and the dark shadows of the Manchester picture have given way to ruggedness and transparency. Still, "The Good Samaritan" is simple and excellent in purpose and composition.

A little known painting entitled "Cruel Vengeance," seems to be a forecast of "Mammon"; a creature with human form and vulture's head presses under his hand a figure like the maiden whose head rests on Mammon's knee. In "Greed and Labour" the seer's eye pierces through the

relations between the worker and his master; Labour is a fine strong figure loaded with the implements of his toil, with no feeling of subjection in his manly face; on the other hand, the miser creeping behind him, clutching the money bags, represents that Greed who, as Mammon, is seen sitting on his throne of death. "Mammon" is, however, the greatest of the three, containing in itself the ideas and forms of the other two. It is a terrible picture of the god to whom many bow the knee—"dedicated to his worshippers." His leaden face shows a consciousness of power, but not happiness arising from power; his dull eyes see nothing, though his mind's eye sees one thing clearly—the money bags on his lap. The two frail creatures of youth and maiden, "types of humanity" as Watts said, are crushed by his heavy limbs, while behind a fire burns continuously, perhaps also within his massive breast.

Portraits.—In portraiture, as in other forms of art, Watts had distinct and peculiar views. He gradually came to the opinion, which he adopted as his first rule in portraiture, that it was his duty, not merely to copy the external features of the sitter, but to give what might be called an

intellectual copy. He declared it to be possible and necessary for the sitter and painter to attain a unity of feeling and a sympathy, by which he (the painter) was inspired. Watts' earlier portraits, while being far from characterless, are not instances of the application of this principle. There is in them a slight tendency to eighteenth-century ideal portraiture, which so often took the sitter (and the observer too) back to times and attitudes, backgrounds and thunderstorms, that never were and never will be.

Watts, however, was slightly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite school. He might, had he wished, have been their portrait painter—and indeed, the picture of the comely Mrs. Hughes, a kind, motherly creature, with a background of distant fields, minutely painted, is quite on the lines of Pre-Raphaelite realism.

Somewhat of the same character is the portrait of Mrs. Nassau Senior, who, with one knee on a sofa, is shown tending flowers, her rippling golden hair falling over her shoulders. A full-length portrait of Miss Mary Kirkpatrick Brunton, dated 1842, also belongs to the old style. Watts had a passion for human loveliness,

and in his day some of the great beauties sat to him. The "Jersey Lily" (Mrs. Langtry) with her simple headdress and downcast eye, appeared at the Academy of 1879. "Miss Rachel Gurney" is a wonderful portrait of a flaming soul imprisoned in a graceful form and graceless dress. Miss Gurney is shown standing, turning slightly to the right with the head again turned over the right shoulder, while the whole effect of energy seems to be concentrated in the flashing eyes. Watts was able to interpret equally well personalities of a very different character, and perhaps the canvas representing Miss Edith Villiers is one of the most successful of his spiritual portraits. Miss Dorothy Dene, whose complexion Watts was one of the first to transfer to canvas, Miss Mary Anderson, and Miss Dorothy Maccallum, were all triumphantly depicted. He will be known, however, as the citizen portrait-painter of the nineteenth century, who preserved for us not merely the form, but the spirit of some of the greatest men of his day. Lord Tennyson sat three times. In 1859 the poet was shown in the prime of life, his hair and beard ruffled, his look determined. In 1864 we had another canvas—

PLATE VI.—LOVE TRIUMPHANT

(At the Tate Gallery)

Time and Death having travelled together through the ages, have run their course and are at length overthrown. Love alone arises on immortal wings, triumphantly, with outspread arms to the eternal skies.

Given to the nation in 1900.

"the moonlight portrait"; the face is that of Merlin, meditative, thoughtful. As you look at it the features stand out with great clearness, the distance of the laurels behind his head can be estimated almost precisely, while seen through them is the gleam of the moon upon the distant water. The 1890 portrait, in scholastic robes, with grizzled beard, and hair diminished, is Tennyson the mystic, and reminds us of his "Ancient Sage"—

> ". . . for more than once when I
> Sat all alone, revolving in myself
> The word that is the symbol of myself,
> The Mortal limit of the self was loosed
> And passed into the Nameless. as a cloud
> Melts into heaven."

The portrait of John L. Motley, the American Minister to England in 1869, and author of "The Rise of the Dutch Republic," is one of the most successful paintings of handsome men; Watts here depicts perfectly the "spiritual body" of strength, purity, and appeal; the eyes are deepest blue, and the hair the richest brown. In this case the artist has, as he was so prone, fallen into symbolism even in portraiture, for we

can trace in the background a faint picture of an old-time fighting ship.

Another classic portrait, so different to that by Whistler, is of Thomas Carlyle. The sage of Chelsea sits ruffled and untidy, with his hands resting on the head of a stick, and his features full of power. He seems protesting against the few hours' idleness, and anxious to get back to the strenuous life. The sitter was good enough to say that the portrait was of "a mad labourer" —not an unfair criticism of a very good portrait.

The Biblical Paintings are, as before said, in partial fulfilment of the frustrated scheme of "Cosmos." "Eve Repentant," in an attitude so typical of grief, is perhaps the most beautiful; it is one of a trilogy, the others being "She shall be called Woman," and "Eve Tempted." It is singular that in these three canvases the painter avoids the attempt to draw the face of the mother of the race. In the first the face is upturned, covered in shadow; in the second it is hid from view by the leaves of the forbidden tree, while in the third Eve turns her back and hides her weeping face with her arms. This habit of Watts to obscure the face is observed

in "The Shuddering Angel," Judgment in "Time, Death, and Judgment," in "Love and Death," "Sic Transit," "Great Possessions," and some others. Often indeed a picture speaks as much of what is not seen as of what is seen.

Incidents from the Gospels are represented by "The Prodigal," where the outcast is seen crouching on the ground, his face fixed on vacuity, almost in the act of coming to himself. "For he had Great Possessions," is, however, the greatest and simplest of all. There the young man who went away sorrowful with bowed head, scarcely knowing what he has lost, is used by Watts as one of his most powerful criticisms of modern life. Although the incident is a definite isolated one, yet the costume, figure, chain of office, and jewelled fingers, clutching and releasing, are of no time or land in particular.

It is not a little remarkable that Watts, who had breathed so deeply the air of Italy, and had almost lived in company of Titian and Raphael, should never have attempted the figure of Christ or His apostles. This was, however, not without reason. His pictures were not only "for all time,"

but apart from time altogether. His only specific reference to Christianity is his beautiful canvas, "The Spirit of Christianity," in which he rebuked the Churches for their dissensions. A parental figure floats upon a cloud while four children nestle at her feet. The earth below is shrouded in darkness and gloom, despite the steeple tower raising its head above a distant village. The rebuke was immediately stimulated by the refusal of a certain church to employ Watts when the officials found he was not of their faith. In this picture Watts approached nearest to the Italian Madonnas both in form and colour.

The Mythical Paintings are, in the main, earlier than the Biblical series, but even here the same note of teaching is struck, and our human sympathies are drawn out towards the figure depicted. In one, "Echo" comes to find her lover transformed into a flower; in another, "Psyche," through disobedience, has lost her love. She gazes regretfully at a feather fallen from Cupid's wing; it is a pink feather, such as might be taken from the plumage of the little Lord of Love who vainly opposes Death in his approach to the beloved one. In "Psyche," Watts has made the

pale body expressive of abject loss; there is no physical effort, except in the well-expanded feet, and no other thought but lost love.

The legend of "Diana and Endymion" was painted three times—"good, better, best." A shepherd loved the Moon, who in his sleep descends from heaven to embrace him. The canvas of 1903 must be regarded as the final success—the sleeping figure is more asleep, his vision more dreamlike and diaphanous. "Orpheus and Eurydice" (painted three times) is perhaps the greatest of his classical pictures. It is one of the few compositions that were considered by its author as "finished." Here again the lover through disobedience loses his love; the falling figure of Eurydice is one of the most beautiful and realistic of all the series of Watts' nudes, and the agony of loss, the energy of struggle, are magnificently drawn in the figure of Orpheus. Looking at the canvas, one recalls the lines of the old Platonic poet-philosopher Boëthius:

"At length the shadowy king,
His sorrows pitying,
'He hath prevailèd!' cried;
'We give him back his bride!

To him she shall belong,
As guerdon of his song.
One sole condition yet
Upon the boon is set;
Let him not turn his eyes
To view his hard-won prize,
Till they securely pass
The gates of Hell.' Alas!
What law can lovers move?
A higher law is love!
For Orpheus—woe is me!—
On his Eurydice—
Day's threshold all but won—
Looked, lost, and was undone!"

In "The Minotaur," that terrible creature, half man, half bull, crushing with his hideous claw the body of a bird, stands ever waiting to consume by his cruel lust the convoy of beauteous forms coming unseen and unwilling over the sea to him. It is an old myth, but Watts intended it for a modern message. The picture was painted by him in the heat of indignation in three hours.

A small but very important group of paintings, which I call "The Pessimistic Series," begins with "Life's Illusions," painted in 1849. "It is," says Watts, "an allegorical design typifying the march of human life." Fair visions of Beauty, the abstract embodiments of divers forms of Hope

and Ambition, hover high in the air above the gulf which stands as the goal of all men's lives. At their feet lie the shattered symbols of human greatness and power, and upon the narrow space of earth that overhangs the deep abyss are figured the brighter forms of illusions that endure through every changing fashion of the world. A knight in armour pricks on his horse in quick pursuit of the rainbow-tinted bubble of glory; on his right are two lovers; on his left an aged student still pores over his work by the last rays of the dying sun; while in the shadow of the group may be seen the form of a little child chasing a butterfly.

This picture has the merit, along with "Fata Morgana," of combining the teaching element with one of the finest representations of woman's form that came from Watts' brush. He was one of those who vigorously defended the painting of the nude. These are some of his words:

"One of the great missions of art—the greatest indeed—is to serve the same grand and noble end as poetry by holding in check that natural and ever-increasing tendency to hypocrisy which is consequent upon and constantly nurtured by civilisation. My aim is now, and will be to the end, not so much to paint pictures which are delightful to the eye, but

pictures which will go to the intelligence and the imagination, and kindle there what is good and noble, and which will appeal to the heart. And in doing this I am forced to paint the nude."

"Fata Morgana" is a picture of Fortune or Opportunity pursued and lost by an ardent horseman. It was painted twice, first in the Italian style, and again in what must be called Watts' own style—much the finer effort. This picture shows us what, in the artist's view, man in this mortal life desires, pursues, and mostly loses. Fortune has a lock of hair on her forehead by which alone she may be captured, and as she glides mockingly along, she leads her pursuers across rock, stream, dale, desert, and meadow typical of life. The pursuit of the elusive is a favourite theme with Watts, and is set forth by the picture "Mischief." Here a fine young man is battling for his liberty against an airy spirit representing Folly or Mischief. Humanity bends his neck beneath the enchanter's yoke—a wreath of flowers thrown round his neck—and is led an unwilling captive; as he follows the roses turn to briars about his muscular limbs, and at every step the tangle

PLATE VII.—THE GOOD SAMARITAN

(At the Manchester Art Gallery)

This is an early picture, painted in the year 1852 and presented to the city of Manchester by the artist in honour of the prison philanthropist, a native of that city.

becomes denser, while one by one the arrows drop from his hand. The thought of "Life's Illusions" and "Fata Morgana" is again set forth in "Sic Transit Gloria Mundi," where we see the body of a king whose crown, and all that represents to him the glory of the world, is left at death. It is not, however, in Watts' conception essential glory that passes away, but the *Glory of the World.* Upon the dark curtain that hangs behind the shrouded figure are words that represent his final wisdom, "What I spent, I had; what I saved, I lost; what I gave, I have."

These I call "Pessimistic paintings," because they represent the true discovery ever waiting to be made by man, that the sum total of all that can be gained in man's external life—wealth, fame, strength, and power—that these inevitably pass from him. To know this, to see it clearly, to accept it, is the happiness of the pessimist, who thenceforward fixes his hope and bends his energies to the realisation of other and higher goods. In this he becomes an optimist, for this is the pursuit, as Watts never ceases to teach, in which man can and does attain his goal. Thus our prophet-painter, having seen and

known and felt all this, having tested it in the personal and intimate life, brings to a triumphant close his great series, where positive rather than negative teaching is given.

The Great Realities.—We have seen in "Chaos" primordial matter; we have now from Watts' brush the origin of things on the metaphysical side. In "The All-pervading," there sits the Spirit of the Universe, holding in her lap the globe of the systems, the representation of the last conclusions of philosophy. This mysterious picture is very low in tone, conforming to Watts' rule to make the colouring suit the subject. Here there is nothing hard or defined; the spirit of the universe is merely suggested or hinted at, his great wings enclose all. The elliptical form of this composition is seen again in "Death Crowning Innocence" and "The Dweller in the Innermost," and the same expressive indefiniteness and lowness of the colour tones. In the latter effort we have the figure of Conscience, winged, dumb-faced and pensive, seated within a glow of light. On her forehead is the shining star, and in her lap the arrows which pierce through all disguises, and a trumpet

that proclaims peace to the world. Here, therefore, is the greatest reality from the psychological side. We have also cosmical paintings representing "Evolution," "Progress," the "Slumber of the Ages," and "Destiny," all of them asking and answering; not indeed finally and dogmatically, but as Watts desired that his pictures should do, stimulating in the observer both the asking and the answering faculty. In "Faith" we have a companion to "Hope." Wearied and saddened by persecutions, she washes her blood-stained feet in a running stream, and recognising the influence of Love in all the beauty of Nature, she feels that the sword is not the best argument, and takes it off. The colouring of this picture is rich and forcible, the maroon robe of the figure being one of Watts' favourite attempts.

A satisfying picture of a little child emerging from the latest wave on the shore of humanity's ocean, asks the question, *Whence and Whither.* I reserve for "Hope" the final word (see Plate III.). If, as I said, the optimism which is spiritual and ideal springs from the pessimism which is material and actual, so too does Hope grow from

the bosom of Despair. This the picture shows. Crouching on the sphere of the world sits the blindfold figure of a woman, bending her ear to catch the music of one only string preserved on her lyre. When everything has failed, there is Hope; and Hope looks, in Watts' teaching, for that which cannot fail, but which is ever triumphant, namely, Love.

The Love Series.—According to Watts, Love steers the boat of humanity, who is seen in one of his canvases tossed about and almost shipwrecked. Love does not do this easily, but he does it. Love, as a winged youth, also guides Life, a fragile maiden, up the rocky steep—Life, that would else fail and fall. Violets spring where Love has trod, and as they ascend to the mountain top the air becomes more golden. This picture, "Love and Life" (see Plate V.) was painted four times. "Love and Death," painted three times, represents the irresistible figure of Death tenderly, yet firmly, entering a door where we know lies the beloved one. This is an eternal theme, suggested, I believe, by a temporal incident —the death of a young member of the Prinsep family. Love vainly pushes back the imperious

figure; the protecting flowers are trodden down and the dove mourns; and with it all we feel that though Love fears Death, yet Death respects Love. Just as "Love and Death" are companion pictures and tell complementary truths, so "Time, Death, and Judgment" is related to "Love Triumphant" (see Plate VI.). In the one we see Time, represented by a mighty youth half clad in a red cloak, striding along with great vigour. His companion, whom he holds by the hand, is Death, the sad mother with weary, downcast eye and outspread lap ready to receive her load; but with neither of them is the final word, for Judgment, poised in the clouds, wields his fiery sword of eternal law and holds the balance before his hidden face. In "Love Triumphant" Love takes the place of, and transcends Judgment. Time and Death having travelled together through the ages, are in the end overthrown, and Love alone rises on immortal wings. Thus the stoical painter reaches his greatest height—tells his best truth.

The Death Series.—As may be expected, Death has no terrors for the fundamental Watts. Never once does Death look with hollow eyes and sunken cheeks, or grasp with bony fingers

at the living. In "Death Crowning Innocence," as a mother she puts her halo on the infant Innocence, whom she claims. Death holds a Court to which all must go—priest, soldier, king, cripple, beautiful woman, and young child. The lion must die, the civilisation be overthrown, wealth, fame, and pride must be let go—so Watts shows in his "Court of Death"; all come to the end of the book marked *Finis.* Death is calm and majestic, with angel wings, and overhead are the figures of Silence and Mystery, guarding, but partially revealing what is beyond the veil—sunrise and the star of hope; while even in the lap of Death nestles a new-born babe—the soul passing into new realms through the gates of Death.

Again, Death is *the Messenger* who comes, not to terrify, but as an ambassador to call the soul away from this alien land, quietly touching the waiting soul with the finger-tips. In the beautiful "Paolo and Francesca" the lovers are seen as Dante told of them; wafted along by the infernal wind; of them he spoke:

> ". . . Bard! Willingly
> I would address these two together coming,
> Which seem so light before the wind."

Francesca's reply to Dante is of Love and Death:

> "Love, that in gentle heart is quickly learnt,
> Entangled him by that fair form . . . ;
> Love, that denial takes from none beloved,
> Caught me with pleasing him so passing well,
> That as thou seest, he yet deserts me not.
> Love brought us to one death."

Watts has admirably caught the sweetness and sorrow of this situation in his beautiful picture, which, again, is one of the very few he considered finally "finished." It is almost a monochrome of blues and greys.

In "Time and Oblivion," one of the earliest of the symbolical paintings, Time is again the stalwart man of imperishable youth, while Oblivion, another form of Death, spreads her mantle of darkness over all, claiming all.

Landscapes.—Although Watts will ever be remembered for his allegorical, biblical, and portrait painting, yet he was by no means deficient in landscape art. Indeed, he carried into that branch of work his peculiar personality. Not only do his landscapes depict beautiful scenery in a fitting manner, joining atmosphere,

sunshine, and colour, but they convey in an extraordinary degree the mood of Nature and of Man. "The Sphinx by Night" has an air of mystery about it that immediately impresses the spectator, and tells him something that cannot be communicated by words. The Italian and the Asiatic canvases by Watts, "Florence," "Fiesole," "Correna," "Cos," and "Asia Minor," all induce the feeling of repose and happiness, and the message that Nature sends to her devotees comes sweetly and calmly in "The Rainbow," where we look over an extensive valley from high ground, while heavy clouds and the rainbow adorn the upper air. In "The Cumulus" we "see skyward great cloud masses rolling, silently swelling and mixing." They recall perhaps the memories of the child, to whom the mountains of the air are a perpetual wonder. When in Savoy in 1888, Watts painted the Alps, again with a cloudy sky and a rocky foreground. In this the quietude of the scene penetrates the beholder. English landscape, to which all true hearts return, was successfully depicted, both in form and spirit, by Watts' "Landscape with Hayricks" (like the Brighton

PLATE VIII.—PRAYER

(At the Manchester Art Gallery)

This is one of the most simple and beautiful of Watts' early works. The young woman is kneeling at the table, book in hand her mind absorbed in thoughts of reverence. Painted in 1860.

Downs), a quiet view from the summit of a hillside, on which are seen some hayricks. But perhaps the highest of them all is that very peaceful idyll named "All the air a solemn stillness holds." It was a view from the garden of Little Holland House. The time is sunset; a man and two horses are wending their way home. There are farm buildings on the left, and a thick wood in the background. In this one we feel how thoroughly Watts uses all forms as expressions of his invisible moods. In purely imaginative landscape, however, Watts struck his highest note. His "Deluge" canvases are wonderful attempts; in "The Dove that returned in the Evening," the bird is the only creature seen flying across the dreary waste of waters, placid but for three long low waves. On the horizon the artist has dimly suggested the ark of Noah. "Mount Ararat" is especially worthy of mention among the landscapes.

Before Watts entered upon his series of great imaginative paintings he had used realism for didactic purposes. In those days his work was less rugged than in later times, and had a delicateness and refinement which is seen to perfection in some of his earlier portraits. A few of these efforts may be mentioned. "Study"

is the bust of a girl, with long red hair, looking upwards; it represents a beautiful combination of spirituality and human affection. "The Rain it raineth every day" is a picture of ennui and utter weariness, beautifully and sympathetically expressed. The colouring is very brave. In "Prayer" (see Plate VIII.) the simplicity of the treatment may lead any one to pass it by as something slight and conventional, but it is perhaps one of the greatest of this type where simplicity and spirituality are combined. In "Choosing" Watts approached very near to the summit of simplicity and charm. A golden-haired girl is choosing a camellia blossom; but where all are so beautiful it is difficult for her to decide. Great interest in this picture lies in the fact that it was painted in 1864, and was drawn from Watts' young bride Miss Ellen Terry. One is almost tempted to find in this picture the germ of allegory which grew to such heights in the artist's later efforts.

The Warrior Series.—Watts, like Ruskin and many other of the nineteenth-century philosophic artists, idealised warfare. His warriors are not clad in khaki; they do not crouch behind muddy

earthworks. They are of the days before the shrapnel shell and Maxim gun ; they wear bright steel armour, wield the sword and lance, and by preference they ride on horseback. Indeed, they are of no time or country, unless of the house of Arthur and the land of Camelot.

We are thus able to understand the characteristic of Watts' warrior pictures. The first is "Caractacus," the British chief; though no Christian, he is the earliest of Watts' heroes. The second is the beautiful "Sir Galahad," whose strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure. We see a knight standing bare-headed at the side of his white horse, gazing with rapt eyes on the vision of the Holy Grail, which in the gloom and solitude of the forest has suddenly dawned on his sight. The features of young Arthur Prinsep, with his bushy hair, who later became a general in the British army, can be detected in this wonderful and simple picture. Its composition is like a stained-glass window. It is of all Watts' perhaps the nearest to mysticism, and at the same time it is an appeal to the young to be like Sir Galahad. The original is in Eton College Chapel.

In 1863 followed "The Eve of Peace," in which we see a warrior of middle age, much like Watts himself at that time, who has lost the passion for warfare, sheathing his sword, glad to have it all over. The peacock feather that is strewn on the floor of "The Court of Death," and lies by the bier in "Sic Transit," is fastened to the warrior's casque. "Aspiration," also taken from young Prinsep (1866), is a picture of a young man in the dawn of life's battle, who, wishing to be a standard-bearer, looks out across the plain. He sees into the great possibilities of human life, and the ardent spirit of life is sobered by the burden of responsibilities. "Watchman, what of the Night?" is another wonderful composition, representing a figure with long hair, clad in armour, looking out into the darkness of the night, with his hand grasping the hilt of the sword. The colour, low in tone, and the whole composition, indicate doubt and yet faith. Ellen Terry was the model for this painting.

"The Condottiere" represents the fighting spirit of the Middle Ages. This soldier is, like the others, clad in armour, and is not likely to have a vision of the Holy Grail. His features

represent the determination and vigour which were required of him in those ferocious days. "The Red Cross Knight accompanying Una" is a charming picture, representing an incident in Spenser's "Faëry Queen," but the palm must be given to "The Happy Warrior," who is depicted at the moment of death, his head falling back, and his helmet unloosed, catching a glimpse of some angelic face, who speaks to him in terms of comfort and of peace. This picture, of all the others, shows how Watts has insisted on carrying to the very highest point of idealism the terrible activities of warfare:

> "This, the Happy Warrior, this is he,
> That every man in arms should wish to be."

He sent a copy, the original of which is in the Munich Gallery, to Lord Dufferin, whose son was killed in the South African War, and he declares that many bereaved mothers have thanked him for the inspiration and comfort it has brought to them.

Watts' pictures are widely distributed; a roomful may be seen at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, S.W. Nearly all the portraits of public

men are at the National Portrait Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London. There is a portrait of Thomas Carlyle in the South Kensington Museum, three or four pictures at the Manchester Corporation Gallery, and one at the Leicester Art Gallery. There are also several of Watts' best pictures in a gallery attached to his country house at Compton in Surrey; while his fresco "Justice" can be seen at the Benchers' Hall, Lincoln's Inn.

Watts was conscious of the benefit he had received from the great men who had preceded him, and in his best moments so essentially humble, that in his last will and testament, and the letters of gift, he rises to the great height of artistic patriotism which always appeared to him in the light of a supreme duty.

The former document has the following phrases: "I bequeath all my studies and works to any provincial gallery or galleries in Great Britain or Ireland, which my executors shall in their discretion select, and to be distributed between such galleries." This Will is dated November 1, 1899, and relates to such works as had not already been disposed of. His great gift

to the nation was made in 1897, accompanied by a characteristic letter in which he says:

"You can have the pictures any time after next Sunday. I have never regarded them as mine, but never expected they would be placed anywhere until after my death, and only see now my presumption and their defects and shrink from the consequences of my temerity! I should certainly like to have them placed together, but of course can make no conditions. One or two are away, and I am a little uncertain about the sending of some others; if you could spare a moment I should like to consult you."

A few weeks later, following a letter from the Keeper of the National Gallery, he writes as follows:

"I beg to thank you and through you the Trustees and Director of the National Gallery for the flattering intention of placing the tablet you speak of, but while returning grateful thanks for the intention of doing me this honour I should like it to be felt that I have in no way desired anything but the recognition that my object in work, and the offering of it, has only been the hope of spending my time and exercising my experience in a worthy manner, leaving to time further judgment. Most certainly I desire that my pictures should be seen to advantage, and have a good effect as an encouragement to artists of stronger fibre and greater vitality, to pursue if only occasionally a similar direction and object."

At the end of a long life by no means devoid of mistakes and disappointments, it would seem as though Watts attained to his desires. The man has passed away, while the witness of his aspirations remains.

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